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> December 2025

✓ Latest release

Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation, Australia

People not working, or working less than they prefer, including whether they want to work, are looking for work, and factors for them to start working

Reference period December 2025

Released 31/03/2026

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Key statistics

In December quarter 2025:

- 1.1 million people (aged 18-75) without a (paid) job wanted a job, with 939,200 available to start within 4 weeks.
- The most common reason men who wanted a job were unavailable to start within 4 weeks was 'Studying or returning to studies'.
- The most common reason women who wanted a job were unavailable to start within 4 weeks was 'Caring for children'.
- 1.9 million people without a job did not want a job, with a further 2.1 million either retired or permanently unable to work.

Upcoming changes to release dates

The March quarter 2026, which was originally scheduled for early August will now be released on 24 June 2026. The 2025-26 financial year will be released on 28 October 2026.

Upcoming changes to the Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation survey

As advised in the September quarter [Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation \(https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/barriers-and-incentives-labour-force-participation-australia/sep-2025\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/barriers-and-incentives-labour-force-participation-australia/sep-2025) release, there will be changes to the way the labour supplementary surveys are conducted as part of the ABS plan to modernise the Labour Force Survey (LFS). Further information can be found in [Modernising the Labour Force Survey \(https://www.abs.gov.au/about/key-priorities/data-acquisition-modernisation-program/modernising-labour-force-survey\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/about/key-priorities/data-acquisition-modernisation-program/modernising-labour-force-survey).

As a result of these changes, the 2025-26 Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation survey will be the last conducted in its current form.

Data from the new supplementary survey, including content previously collected in Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation, will be compiled and published on a calendar year basis. More information on the content and timing of the suite of outputs that will be published from the new supplementary survey will be provided over the course of 2026, however we expect a similar range of data as published across the current suite of releases would continue to be available.

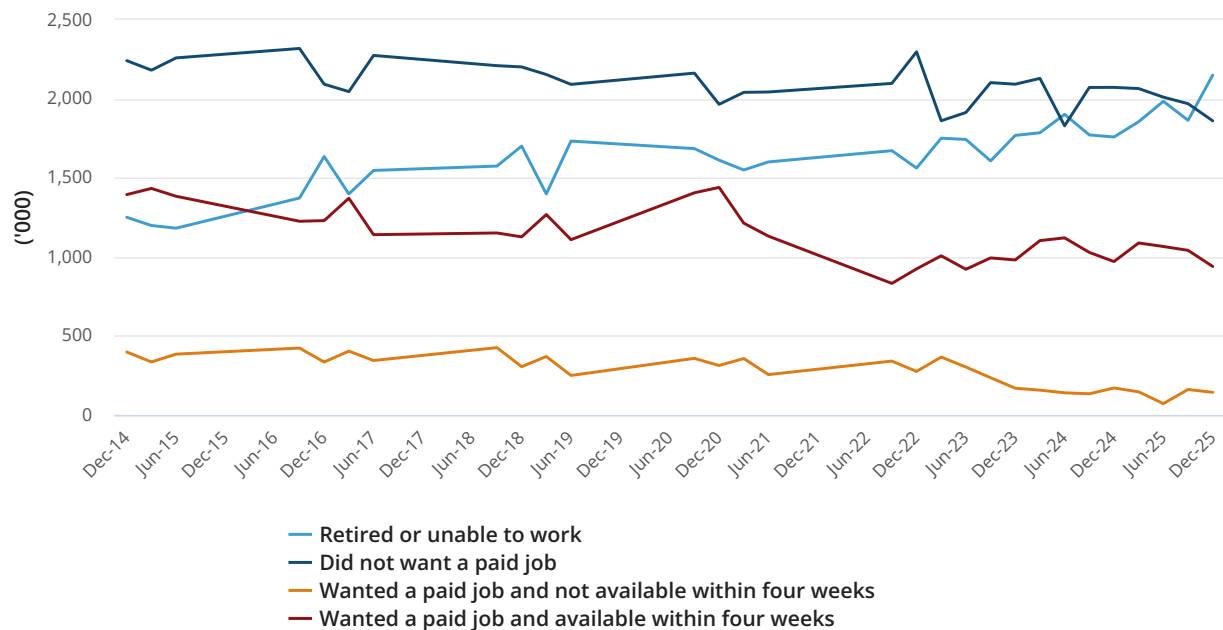
People who did not have a job

In December quarter 2025, there were 19 million people aged 18-75 years. Of these:

- 14.2 million were employed or had a job to start or return to (74%)
- 2.1 million were retired or permanently unable to work (11%)
- 2.9 million did not have a (paid) job (15%) - 1.1 million people wanted a (paid) job (37%) and 1.9 million people did not want a (paid) job (63%).

Of the 1.1 million people who wanted a job, 939,200 (87%) were available within 4 weeks and 143,100 (13%) were not available within 4 weeks.

People who did not have a job (aged 18-75)



Note: The survey was conducted every second year prior to 2022-23.

In December quarter 2025, of those aged 18-75 years who did not have a job, were not retired and not permanently unable to work:

- 1.8 million had a long-term health condition, and of these, 603,000 (34%) wanted a paid job.
- 1.1 million had a disability, with 376,800 of these people wanting a paid job (34%).

Note that people can report having both a long-term health condition and a disability.

People who did not want to work

Of the 1.9 million people aged 18-75 years who did not want a job in December 2025, the main reason for not wanting a job was 'No need, satisfied with current arrangements' (40%). For both men and women aged 18-24 years, 'Studying or returning to studies' was the main reason for not wanting a job (80% for men and 54% for women).

For women aged 25-39 years, 'Caring for children' (44%) was the main reason for not wanting a job and for men was 'Long-term health condition or disability' (30%).

For men aged 40-54 years, 'Caring for ill, disabled or elderly' was the main reason for not wanting a job (28%) and for women was 'No need, satisfied with current arrangements' (32%).

People who were not available to work

The main reasons women who wanted a job were not available within 4 weeks were:

- Caring for children (37%)
- Long-term health condition or disability (31%).

The main reasons men who wanted a job were not available within 4 weeks were:

- Studying or returning to studies (48%).
- Long-term health condition or disability (24%).

Incentives to work

Of the 2.9 million people who did not have a job in December quarter 2025, the most important factor associated with either returning to or commencing work was 'Finding a job that matches skills and experience', which was rated as 'Very important' by 31% of people.

For people with a long-term health condition, the most important factors were 'Finding a job that matches skills and experience' (29%) and 'Ability to work part-time hours' (28%). For people with a disability, it was 'Maintaining the most of any government benefits or allowances' and 'Access and facilities in the workplace for any medical conditions or disabilities' (both by 29%).

Data downloads

Quarterly time series

[Download all \(44.45 MB\)](#)

Table Q1. Participation status

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Table Q2. Whether wanted a job or more hours

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Table Q3. Unavailable workers and job seekers

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Table Q4. Reasons not looking for work or more hours

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Table Q5. Difficulties finding work or more hours

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Table Q6. Reasons for not wanting to work or more hours

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Table Q7. Incentives to work

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Methodology

[Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation, Australia methodology, December 2025](#)